

French Pleasure Cities Welcome Our Boys

Charming Aix-les-Bains to Be Open to Men on Leave, but Paris Is Barred

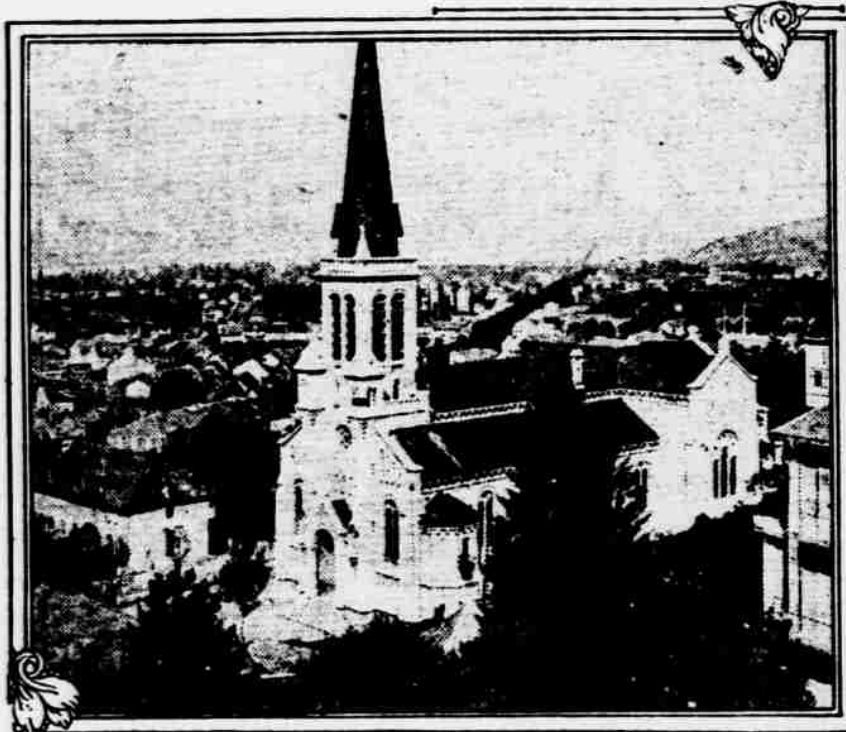
FURLOUGH regulations for men of the American Expeditionary Force in France have just been put into effect by the general headquarters staff. A soldier on leave has seven full days every four months, to be spent in a predetermined locality and as little as possible in Paris. Leave will not be given for Paris, except in exceptional circumstances, when the permissionaire will have delivered to him a pink ticket of leave card which will pass him through the stringently policed lines surrounding the entrenched camp of Paris, as the capital is still known in military parlance.

Others will have a similar card of white which will in general allow the holder to spend his furlough in the prescribed leave zone of Savoie and its charming resort towns of Chambéry, Aix-les-Bains, Uriage, Chartreuse and Grenoble. Here accommodation has been provided for him in certain of the big hotels at rates which are known beforehand, though if he chooses he will be free to make his own personal arrangements, in this region, which is one of the most beautiful in France.

When another leave period comes around the enlisted man will have the choice of another locality. He will find in any case that the Young Men's Christian Association has taken his welfare in charge, and his way will be smoothed, once he arrives, as well as on the journey, which is practically a daylight ride from most of the bases and camps.

It is expected that so far as possible he will make use of special trains, like those of the French poilus, which are called trains des permissionaires, but otherwise he will be free to proceed as he prefers, paying a quarter of the regular fare. There will be no actual mothering or chaperoning by the authorities, and his liberty will be in no way curtailed so long as he holds to his prescribed itinerary.

Officers will have a like period of leave



General view of Aix-les-Bains, French rest town for our boys Over There.

in a like interval, but will not be confined to any particular locality. For them, it is safe to say, they will choose the Riviera, where there is ample accommodation and a sufficient train service even in these days of restricted travel.

Enlisted men who have relatives in any part of France will further be allowed to go to them upon the presenting of proper credentials, and their passes will be made out for the particular place to which they are bound, with seven full days there and a sufficient time in addition to allow them to go and come by the most direct route.

It is not anticipated that more than 10 per cent. of any particular command will be away from their units at any one time and the roster will be made up on this basis.

There are certain other inevitable restrictions, such as those governing visits to neutral and allied contiguous countries, but a liberal interpretation of the general order which has just been made public leads one to infer that an American soldier who might have relatives in Italy would be allowed, if material conditions were not unfavorable, to cross the Alps and visit his people.

With those of Spanish or Swiss descent there might be more difficulty, and it is seemingly unreasonable to expect that a man on furlough would be allowed to cross to England in these times. This may be a hardship on those of English, Scotch or Irish descent who might want to visit the home and people of their parents, but, as the French say, "C'est la guerre."

All men and officers on leave will of course remain always in uniform, will carry their usual identity card and the additional leave card of white or pink and will wear their identification tag. For the rest the permissionaire's time will count when his leave card is indorsed by the military police or other authority upon arrival at his destination, and he must leave on the first train after midnight after seven full days have been passed, though he may do so sooner if he chooses.

As for the latter contingency one would hardly consider it possible when the charms and advantages of Aix-les-Bains and La Grande Chartreuse and the other places mentioned are considered. He may enjoy mountain climbing, fishing for trout in the mountain streams and lakes, golf on one of the finest courses in

Special Railroad and Hotel Rates Given and Rest Period Is Full Seven Days

France, take a course of baths in the old Roman baths, which have made Aix one of the most fashionable spas of Europe, or attend theatrical and musical representations in the casinos given by American artists. In short, in addition to the charms of the foreign framing, he will find a bit of home from home.

The region of the Savoie department is suitable both for summer and winter and the roads are of that superlative excellence which puts the good roads of France in the very front rank of the good roads of the world. He may have little chance for automobiling, but he may bicycle, hiring a wheel where he will, and he may easily make a twenty mile bike in any direction and find something new and strange.

Mont Blanc is always in plain sight, its snow crowned cap forming a background most unusual and the forests of the Chartreuse Massif have ever been a delight for holiday makers, who have ranked its famous monastery, now widowed of its monks, as one of the chief shrines of Christendom. Furthermore the ground is historic as being that trail over which Napoleon advanced on Paris on his return from Elba.

Once a soldier has his ticket for his furlough, and has satisfied his officers that he has sufficient funds in hand for his expenses, the way is simply pointed out to him and off he may go. If he travels on a special train his transportation will be furnished him, otherwise he pays his quarter fare as do the French soldiers. No commutation for rations and no rationing will be supplied while he is on leave.

Officers and army nurses are expected to travel first class, non-commissioned officers in second class and enlisted men in third class. Lodgings will be assigned on arrival and must be paid for in advance. Prices have been arranged at from \$2.20 to \$3.40 a day, all included. No liquors, no firearms and no explosives allowed.

"Miss King of Smith" Star Y. M. C. A. Worker at the Front

By ARTHUR GLEASON.

A DIVISIONAL secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association in France is the same thing as a Field General. He is in charge of the social, recreational, athletic and educational life of from 6,000 to 30,000 men. That means he gets their spare time after drilling.

It is his job to get anywhere from eight to thirty huts built, heated, lighted, to have their canteens stocked with chocolate, razor blades and other comforts and necessities, to keep camions and touring cars running out along the line and to load them with writing paper, magazines, speakers and vaudeville artists, to give the soldiers a brisk evening for seven nights of every week.

Briefly, he runs a chautauqua, a circuit of which Mr. Keith used to call "refined" vaudeville, a garage, a system of cheap lunch counters, a chain of department stores and a syndicate of sporting clubs. In his hours of leisure he adds up accounts, receives Generals and wonders where the next supply of lumber, gas and oil is coming from.

The best divisional secretary I have ever met is Miss King—Helen Maxwell King, assistant professor of French in Smith College. Her father was Minister to Siam. She has traveled widely and has lived in France. There are advantages in education—her kind of education—which means fluent French, business efficiency, the tact of Tim Sullivan. To visitors she says:

"We give you all the welcome we can extend, and all the food we can provide."

Officially, she is not divisional secretary at all. She is canteen worker. But by the account of what she has done any one can see that she has created Young Men's Christian Association work in her division and is generalissimo.

Seven weeks ago she came to the muddy village. Troops were arriving. The village was the centre of a number of camps

Great Handicaps Overcome by College Professor in Keeping Up Men's Spirits

housing thousands of men. More than a dozen association men were assigned to create joy for these soldiers in the rainy countryside.

The secretaries did not speak French. Miss King, the lone woman of the outfit, is as rapid in her French as a poult. She found rooms for the men in the French village. Arriving at 6 P. M. on a Monday, she had a hot mess operating by Tuesday at supper time.

She varies the village stock with American canned goods to avoid monotony and give a taste of home. The peasant family who cook the mess were puzzled by her additions to the menu.

"We eat the same things every day," said the father. "It doesn't bother us."

Twenty men billeted, twenty men fed—that was only a tiny beginning of her work. When the army officers came to spy out the land for their men Miss King and a couple of secretaries helped them find billets for the newcomers.

While lending a hand to the military Miss King's secretary crowd began to dig in with their own work. They took an old deserted convent on a hill. The rear room was devoted to the fire department of the village, the hand pump, the hand drawn wagon, the garden hose, tiny faded red equipment, like a child's toys laid away in an attic. The front room was a massive stone dungeonlike apartment, where they spread their canteen and opened counters.

Then they found an old saw mill down by the river side. They discovered it was a river that could widen two hundred feet in a couple of days. The wind wrecked a couple of tents. And then they moved into a barracks. There was a spring in the centre of the barracks and it made a pond.

The piano was placed on stilts. In one barracks the roof was a sieve. Often the only light is by candle and four men can

be seen reading with their heads up to one candle.

Finding that time hung heavy on her hands, she opened French classes for American soldiers in five villages. There are a couple of companies where over 60 per cent. of the men are foreign born or children of the first generation.

These men, restless under monotony, eager for the closeup in the trenches, live on impression rather than thought.

There can be no detailed intensive work with soldiers keyed to battle. Whatever is said and shown must come with the thrust and brevity and quick change of a motion picture. In nothing larger than in this, Miss King laid off the academic wrappings of her Bryn Mawr degree and her Smith methods, and taught French by picture and vivid phrase.

Adaptability is her gift. And she used the classes (attended by from 30 to 100 men) to teach French customs. She interpreted their fine womanhood, their courtesy, their long endurance. But it all had to be done in rapid fire talks, sometimes suddenly cut off.

In between the hours of regular work the lady jumped on her truck and helped the workers buy wood, hardware, nails, anything they needed. The situation always calls for skilled treatment. The attitude to officers must be friendly and yet poised; the attitude to men democratic but commanding respect.

Miss King has proved that many of us have long believed that the chief influence over here on army morale is the presence of the right kind of women. It cheers loneliness and purges language and lifts the level of daily life. It is better than preaching and pledges.

Miss King believes that each hut needs two women, one an older woman, bringing the mother touch; the other younger, but well poised, preferably over 26 years of age. And if possible one of the women

should be able to help a bit with music.

Music speaks to the soldier with a more direct language than human speech. It drives away all kinds of troubles.

Recently other women helpers have come into the district. There is a charming and beautiful Quakeress, the mother of grown up daughters. To such a woman the boys in mental suffering come. There are boys who have run away from home and older men who have lost their wives by death and long for human understanding.

It is a long fight to convert a wet, war poor countryside into a happy home for American soldiers. It would be a bad business to let the people at home think that everything is running so smoothly that there are no more worries. Rather they must continue to help with money, mechanics, motor cars, canteen supplies, gasoline, oil and hundreds of efficient workers, men and women.

I have been recently seeing huts where no outside help in the way of talk, music or movie had come in a period of ten days. The weary hutman, after an eight hour day of chasing candles and cord wood, had to create an evening's programme of lively entertainment for a villageful of men.

There are limits to vivacity and good will. American communities must send swift, vigorous backing. They must send chauffeurs, mechanics and the Lambs Club, and an entertainment manager like Belasco.

Patience and a sense of humor are needed every hour. But even these wear down in a body that is forever at a strain beyond the endurance of the human machine. A tired person can't listen quietly and respond eagerly. He can't win friendship out of shy boys. He can't think large, and plan bright spots in a leaden landscape.

Persons like Miss King will go on till they drop. But every one wants to prevent that. Every one wants more like them, an ever fresh army of reserves to tune the music to a steady march.